

same cities—Liverpool and Manchester—is the “Duke of Bridgewater’s canal,” now also the property of Lord Francis Egerton.

This being a private work there are no published statements of the amount of traffic upon it; but from information which I obtained at Runcorn from persons who had the best opportunity of knowing, I estimate it at about 1,600,000 tons. In travelling in a packet from Manchester to Runcorn, a trip of five hours duration, I counted no less than 93 loaded boats in motion—of which 68 were ascending and 25 descending.

I was informed by the Agent, that the tonnage had increased about 10 per cent. since the opening of the Rail Road.

If the Rail Road does not carry a vast trade between these cities, it is not for want of opportunity. The trade is there, ready to take the route which offers the greatest aggregate economy; and though the distance by either Canal is 55 per cent. greater than by the Railway, the economy is on the side of the Canal.

Still, it is not to be doubted that the Railway might take the trade of all these works if the stockholders were willing to convey it at a loss, and make up the deficiency from their own pockets. There are but two or three cases within my knowledge, where the peculiar circumstances of the Rail Road are such as to render that movement in the eyes of the stockholders compatible with good economy.

On the Duke of Bridgewater’s Canal, as on many others in England, the competition maintained by the Canal for the conveyance of passengers, is quite equal to that which the Railway carries on for the goods. No less than twelve packet-boats leave and arrive at Manchester daily by this line, besides three by the Mersey and Irwell—making altogether fifteen out and in daily—and all generally well filled. I was informed by the captain of the boat on which I travelled, that the number going by the Canal this year is greater than in any previous year.

The Canals of the Midland Counties offer numerous evidences of the fact to which I have already alluded, of the little appreciation of the public of the magnitude of the traffic of the English Canals. The Railways are the great lines of travel, and by the magnificence of their arrangements and the speed and power of their machinery, force a continual expression of admiration. The Canals are seen only by the boatmen, and the poor wayfarer, to whom they offer for a shilling what the Rail Road will give for a crown, and who are not in a condition to keep the value of the benefit continually before the public eye.

In 1816 the quantity of coal passing along the various Canals of the Midland Counties, was estimated at about 10,000,000 tons. Since that period the coal trade of Great Britain has nearly doubled, and the coal from the mines in these counties has been pushed nearer to the sea-board—but I have no more recent estimate of the value of that portion which is carried on these Canals. It must have greatly increased, though probably not in proportion to the increase of the aggregate trade. I cannot conveniently sum up at